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JOHN OVERY,

THE MISER OF SOUTHWARK FERRY:

A DRAMA IN THREE ACTS,

By DOUGLAS JERROLD,

Author of the Mutiny at the Nore. The Devil's Ducat. Ambrose Gwinett. Bride of Ludgate. Thomas à Becket.

PRINTED FROM THE ACTING COPY

With Remarks, Biographical & Critical,

By D—G.

TO WHICH ARE ADDED,

A DESCRIPTION of the COSTUME, Cast of the CHARACTERS, ENTRANCES and EXITS, RELATIVE POSITIONS of the Performers on the Stage, and the whole of the STAGE BUSINESS, as now performed in the METROPOLITAN MINOR THEATRES.

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John Obery.

Shotbolt. Old man of gold and blood,—stab thine own child?

Act III. Scene 3.

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REMARKS.

John Obery.

“ I give and I devise (old Euclio said,
And sigh'd) my lands and tenements to Ned.”
Your money, sir ?—“ My money, sir !—What, all ?
Why, if I must—(then wept)—I give it Paul.”
The manor, sir ?—“ The manor !—Hold,” he cried ;
“ Not that,—I cannot part with that,” and died.

SUCH is the striking picture that our inimitable satirist draws of one of our ruling passions. Avarice is, perhaps, the strongest as well as the most captivating of vices. If it attract not the earliest, it endures to the last ; and would seem to promote longevity, if the protracted existence of the miser be any criterion. We pity the wretch who denies himself the common necessities of life ; but in this self-infliction there is a pleasure as intense as in the most refined enjoyment of the intellectual mind. “ If mankind are unhappy (says Goldsmith), it is of little consequence *what* occasions the disquietude. Real and imaginary evils are synonymous.” And pleasure, from whatever source it be derived, is *still* pleasure. The sensualist at his debauch, and the miser over his money-bags, give melancholy proof in their opposite passions and pursuits, that “ happiness is happiness.”


Those who *make* fortunes seldom *spend* them. Little dreamt the miserable grub whose final page we are about to record, that his hoards would one day be devoted to build a temple to that Being, whom he neither worshipped nor acknowledged. We may emulate the infidel spirit that bowed before the goddess of reason, personated by a reeling Cyprian, and, having destroyed these glorious fabrics, prostitute their funds to other purposes ; but the memory of those who raised them, and of those whose learning and

piety so well fulfilled the intentions of their founders, shall not be less revered and sacred.

“The first religious house on the Bankside (says Peñnant) was that of St. Mary Overie, said to have been originally founded by a maiden named Mary for sisters, and endowed with the profits of a ferry across the *Eye*, or river Thames.” The story is, that one John Overy, a miser, who lived about the eleventh century, rented the ferry of Southwark, before a bridge was built across the Thames. Flattering himself that his apprentices would volunteer one banyan day, should a master so munificent be gathered to his fathers, he counterfeited death, and suffered himself to be laid out; hoping by this expedient to snatch at least one scanty meal from the mouths of his cormorants. But he sadly miscalculated; for his apprentices, conceiving the death of a ravenous old miser a matter for especial rejoicing, resolved to make a night of it;—in furtherance of which, they stormed the cupboard, which so terrified the ferryman, that he started up from his bier, grinning ghastly horrible at their merriment; when one of the roysterers, taking the grim intruder for a ghost, struck him with the butt-end of an oar, and made a ghost of him in reality! His daughter Mary wrote to her lover the glad tidings; whereupon he instantly took horse for London, but on his way thither was thrown from his steed, and killed. Mary sought consolation in a monastery, on which she bestowed the miser’s gold; and the monks, to reward her piety, canonised her, built a church, and gave it her name; which church, says the record, is known as St. Mary Overy to this day. We hope that good taste and piety will not be overruled by low jobbers and sacrilegious levellers; but that those who possess this precious relic will restore its beautiful nave that now stands open to the wind and rain, and in which repose the ashes of Gower, adorned by his venerable and stately tomb.

From this story Mr. Jerrold has taken the *hint*, and no more, of the present drama. By one critic the plot has been fiercely attacked, and the language lavishly extolled;

but the censure and approbation are alike extravagant.—The most objectionable part is where John Overy's passion for wealth overcomes his regard for his daughter's virtue; a circumstance which, however natural in a wretch so sordid, is better avoided on the stage; and the denouement is hurried and unskilful. There is considerable strength in the character of Overy; some pleasantry in the wild gallants, Mayfly and Parroquet; and in Bosk (particularly where he describes the poor boy Leonard's sins, and the miser's covetousness), a shrewdness and quaint expression, that claim honourable mention. The great merit of this drama is in the language, which is occasionally vigorous, and written in praiseworthy emulation of the old comedy, of which, if it reach not the excellence, is still entitled to encouragement. We must be hypercritics if we did not, in the very best humour, take the will for the deed.

 D—G.

STAGE DIRECTIONS.

The Conductors of this Work print no Plays but those which they have seen acted. The *Stage Directions* are given from personal observations, during the most recent performances.

R. means *Right*; L. *Left*; C. *Centre*; R. C. *Right of Centre*; L. C. *Left of Centre*; D. F. *Door in the Flat*, or Scene running across the back of the Stage; C. D. F. *Centre Door in the Flat*; R. D. F. *Right Door in the Flat*; L. D. F. *Left Door in the Flat*; R. D. *Right Door*; L. D. *Left Door*; S. E. *Second Entrance*; U. E. *Upper Entrance*.

. The Reader is supposed to be on the Stage, facing the Audience.

Costume.

JOHN OVERY.—A dark brown tattered shirt dress, with belt ; bare arms and legs : shoes.

BARON FITZGEFFREY.—*First Dress*—A russet-brown shirt dress ; bare legs and arms, shoes—bonnet to correspond.

MAYFLY.—*First Dress*—A blue shirt dress, decorated with silver buttons ; bonnet of the same ; bare legs and arms ; shoes—*Second dress*—A tattered dress and cloak.

PARROQUET.—*First dress*—A buff shirt dress, trimmed with buttons ; bonnet of the same ; bare legs and arms : shoes.—*Second dress*—The same with cloak.

DAGGER.—Similar dress.

BOSK.—A black shirt dress, and bonnet ; belt—bare legs and arms : shoes.

SHOTBOLT.—A dark brown shirt dress : bare legs and arms : shoes.

TRISTAN.—A green shirt dress ; bonnet,—bare legs and arms : shoes.

BALDWIN and WOLSTAND.—Shape-dresses, with cloaks.

LEONARD.—*First dress*—A tattered shirt dress.—*Second dress*—A blue shirt dress, decorated with silver.

MARY.—A dark slate-coloured gown.

Cast of the Characters.

As originally sustained at the Royal Surrey Theatre.

John Overy, (<i>the Miser of the Southwark Ferry.</i>)	Mr. Williams.
Shotbolt, (<i>one of Overy's Ferry-men—rejected suitor of Mary Overy.</i>)	Mr. Osbaldiston.
Bosk, (<i>an Apprentice of Overy's.</i>)	Mr. Vale.
Baron Fitzgeffrey, (<i>disguised as Will Shafton—a favoured lover of Mary Overy.</i>)	Mr. Warwick.
Mayfly, (<i>a ruined, dissipated gallant.</i>)	Mr. Wynne.
Parroquet, } (<i>Mayfly's Associates.</i>)	{ Mr. Rogers.
Dagger, }	{ Mr. Hicks.
Baldwin	Mr. Martin.
Wolstand, (<i>an English Merchant—brother to Overy.</i>)	Mr. Gough.
Father Robert,	Mr. Webb.
Tristan, (<i>the Baron's Page.</i>)	Miss Somerville.
Leonard, (<i>Grandson to Overy.</i>)	Miss P. Horton.

Boatmen, &c.

Mary Overy, (*Daughter of the Miser.*) Mrs. Fitzwilliam.

JOHN OVERY.

ACT I.

SCENE I.—*A Street in London.*

Enter BOSK and FITZGEFFREY, R. S. E.

Fitz. And poor Mary Overy, is, it seems, a prisoner to-day?

Bosk. Aye, her father keeps her at the fire-side, or rather, starves her at no fire at all.

Fitz. How came so base a churl, possessed of so innocent, so beautiful a child?

Bosk. A puzzling question: 'tis as though a honeysuckle should spring from, and twist around, a bar of iron: aye, he's a sorry knave, though my master.

Fitz. Why stay with him?

Bosk. The law, Sir, the law: I'm bound to bear him, as the knave bears the stocks, the thief the whip, the scold the ducking-stool.

Fitz. How long have you been his apprentice?

Bosk. Not an entire day.

Fitz. You jest—not a day!

Bosk. No: when I entered his service, he told me it was a fast-day—marry, I have never seen the end of that day yet.

Fitz. Yet he is rich?

Bosk. Be sure of that: Sir, he's as full of jewels and gold, as an Indian idol!—food he cares not for—he can breakfast off the glitter of a silver penny, dine and sup off the tinkling of a noble:* and for raiment, let him rub himself against his money-bags, and, in his own conceit, he is clothed finer than the Mayor.

Fitz. Poor wretch: and thus he mortifies his flesh.

Bosk. Flesh! he has not flesh enough to bait a trout-hook: Sir, I tell you, a worm that lives a whole summer on one hazle-nut, is a glutton to him—a spider would sooner fall into an indigestion, or a bat die with apo-

* The author pleads guilty to the commission of numerous anachronisms.

plex. Sir, he never eats: if 'twere not that he sometimes spoke, his jaws would grow together. Ah! you gentlemen that wait upon the courtiers have a rare time of it.

Fitz. You would like to be among us then?

Bosk. Like! if 'twere in the country of the Mogul, so that there be roast meat there—I have heard that there be such things as a broiled rasher, tell me, is it true? I have dreamt of a roasted capon, say, is it merely a vision?

Fitz. You are a merry knave: here—[*gives him money*] forswear your master's religion, and eat:—hark'ye, tell the pretty Mary that I will find means to elude her father's vigilance, and see her to-night.

Bosk. Nay, that you may very easily do: her father plies with Shotbolt at the ferry; I shall be left at home and can assist you—name your hour.

Fitz. Eight.

Bosk. I'll be watchful.

[*Exit, L.*]

Fitz. The innocent girl, unconscious of my real station, thinks me only the humble Will Shafton, the keeper of my falcons. Though set about by all the chilling circumstances of poverty, the daughter of a ravenous, mindless miser, the artless Mary has that inner light, which, amidst the flash of jewels, and the glitter of crowns, asserts its right of homage and of love.—Who comes hither? ah, my page, Tristan.

Enter TRISTAN, L.

Now, speak—your mission——

Tris. Has been fruitless.

Fitz. I bless the gods for it: yet tell me, you were not cold in your entreaty?

Tris. Sir, all the eloquence which a bad cause could inspire,—and too often devils plead with angels tongues—I used to urge my suit.

Fitz. And she rejected it?

Tris. Rejected! Sir, there is no tongue can paint the indignation with which she flung it from her.

Fitz. Tell me, every circumstance; though you speak an hour, 'twill to my loving ear, be but a golden minute.

Tris. To try the virtue of the humble Mary, by you desired, I feigned a mission from the Baron Fitzgeffrey;—in your name, offered wealth, pleasure,—

Fitz. Aye, aye, this I know: but when you made this offer, linked as it was with foul dishonor, what said she?

Tris. Nothing: with subtle winding of speech I worked into her confidence, spoke glowingly and long on a courtly life, painted the thousand roses that sprung up beneath its touch, the heavenly music that still bathed its sense, the hues of beauty that still met its eyes:—I stood in her father's hovel, a temple of misery and desolation, and opposed to its wretchedness a land of fairy ground; I beckoned her into its magic circle, but when she learned that to enter it, she must submit her fair, unwrinkled brow to the festering touch of shame—

Fitz. Aye, then what said she?

Tris. Not a word, but a thousand tongues were speaking in her eyes; her eloquent blood rushed into her neck—her white arm was crimsoned—her thoughts were too mighty for expression, and laboured in her woman's breast: with a tremor of the eyelids, tears burst from their source, she flung them thence; and then, pale, cold, and statue-like, with placid lips, and eyes looking mingled pity and reproach, she bade me to depart.

Fitz. And did you leave her thus?

Tris. Sir, it had been sacrilege: my heart was stung within me, I threw myself at her feet, but she interpreted my thoughts, and raising me up, with words, full of sweet patience, murmured forgiveness, but told me ne'er again to come on such an errand.

Fitz. Nor ever shalt thou, my good boy: all my idle thoughts are vanished, and Mary Overy is now, indeed, the bride elect of Baron Fitzgeffrey. [*Exeunt, l.*]

SCENE II.—*The house of Overy—every thing bespeaks the extreme of wretchedness and poverty—boat-tackling is lying about—a sail hung upon the wall—a pair of sculls, and other things, indicating the trade of the miser.—OVERY discovered, at a table, counting money.*

Overy. Ninety-nine, a hundred—well, very well; there are twenty pounds, and a rose-noble, clear profit: well, ha! ha! good brain, good brain! So, now for young master Parroquet's account: ha! I have melted a hundred good acres of his into this bag; he hath now, a few shining pieces, and no land—not a rood: 'tis mine! mine! old Overy's, the poor, hard-working, Thames ferry-man's. My neighbours envy me, they point at, call me

names, toss the head, curl the lip, and almost curse me, as I creep by them: what of that?—if my blood warm a little, I place my finger on my gold, and all is calm again. But all is vain, vain, vain—I shall die poor—a beggar, an old, grey-headed beggar: my servants rob me, eat like wolves!—My daughter! oh, there now, my own child helps to consume my substance: what had I to do with children? [*to his money.*] Here are my children, my heart, my soul, my earth, my heaven.

MAYFLY runs in through the door in C.

May. What ho! Ferry-man!

Overy. Ha! [*In the greatest alarm, he pulls off his cloak, and throws it over the money.*]

May. How now! good father—what! at your prayers? by the rood you shake like a seared leaf!

Overy. An old man, Sir, an old man.

May. Now, good father, I want money.

Overy. Alack, alack, Sir, and where would you have it?

May. Here!

Overy. Your honor is merry!—here?—very merry! 'twould make a dead man smile to hear you jest.

May. Faith, I jest not: look you, I am one of those birds of gay feather, who must e'en venture all their substance on their backs, to wing their way to better fortune: you must let me have money; will you?

Overy. Aye, Sir, aye; here are my grey hairs, take, and if it should please you, coin them: here's my old withered heart, and if you can stamp nobles out of it, 'tis your's: prick my veins, Sir; if that they drop silver or gold, I deny you not.

May. The cant of the market:—in a word young master Parroquet directed me to you: he told me of your wealth.

Overy. Master Parroquet? a wag! Sir, a wag! He would put a trick upon an old man.—Look at my cabin, Sir; look at me; does either house or master speak of wealth?

May. In truth, no; it is a sorry hut enough; and if this be part of your wardrobe—

[*Mayfly. is about to lift the cloak with the point of his sword, when Overy, in a paroxysm of fear, clutches his arm.*]

Overy. Robber ! villain ! hold !

May. How now, are you mad ? what passion's this ?

Overy. Pardon an old man's weakness, you will smile at the fancy, Sir, but I would not have my garment touched by your weapon—'tis an ill omen.

May. Well, giving you good security, shall I have the money ?

Overy. For the love of master Parroquet, whom I know to be a worthy gentleman—I will strive to borrow—how much ?

May. Fifty silver pounds.

Overy. 'Tis a large sum ; an' I had it, I were rich indeed—but the security ?

May. Look here ! [*produces a bracelet.*]—this diamond bracelet,—look at it ; is not that the true water ?

Overy. A plain old man, Sir, I have no judgment in such toys :—they glitter rarely, yet I'd as soon look on so many dew-drops on a briar ;—come, Sir,—[*aside.*] how to get rid of him ?—Walk on a few paces, Sir ; I'll follow you and dispatch the business.

[*Leonard, who has entered at the back during the last speech, takes up Overy's cloak, and brings it to him.*]

Leo. Nay, then, grandfather, the air is cold, pray take your cloak.

Overy. [*bursting with passion.*] Thou Satan's imp——

[*The child runs to Mayfly, and subsequently shrinks off*]

May. Ha ! gold !—

Overy. [*throws himself before it.*] Not mine ! not mine—a neighbour's ! a neighbour's—

May. Nay, stand from before it !

Overy. Approach it not ! stir not a foot ! the snows of age are on my head, its frost is at my heart, yet stir one step, and these old fingers shall tear—

[*Overcome with emotion, he throws himself upon his knees.*]
good kind young gentleman ! touch not an old man's all !

May. Thou worse than worm ! though it were a deed of charity, to throw the heaps abroad into the world, I'll touch them not.—Bring the fifty pounds.

Overy. I will, I will : on the ferry, this night, this night at sunset ; as I am a poor, wretched old man, I will be there ;—but go—go—

May. I take your word : see that you fail me not.

[*Exit, C. D.*

Overy. He's gone: I'm sick, almost choaked ;—but to secure my money, before my daughter—oh, would she were bed-ridden, she's so light-o'-foot; and that little wretch, the offspring of a disobedient son, he nestles in my house, like a bird of ill omen; an owl in mine ear, a sparrow at my corn: he shall away, where, no matter; the world is wide enough—but first let me secure this. [*pulls up his sleeve,—puts the bracelet on his arm.*

[*Music.—During this speech, Overy has been placing his money in a chest at wing.*

Enter BOSK, C. D. eating.

Bosk. That Will Shafton is the most considerate fellow that ever carried bird on fist: I marvel that the root quakes not; this pasty is the first piece of deer's flesh that hath been eaten under it this forty years: but, be careful, Bosk, drop no crumbs, they tell tales; there be no mice to pick them up, for their skeletons hang in the walls as a warning to new comers. Let me see, I have now money enough to buy good provender for a month.

[*Sets himself on a stool at the table.*

Here it is—

[*Music.—He places money upon the table; Overy strikes him on the back, he looks round, and Overy at the same time snatches up the money.*

Overy. Villain! robber!—

Bosk. My money!

Overy. Thy money, thy master's—dost thou not blush to look upon my face? Do I keep thee in fatness and in idleness, fill thy body with good food, and clothe thy back with raiment, and must thou rob me?

[*Snatches from Bosk's hand the remains of what he has been eating.*

What is this? [*eats it.*] villain! thou hast stolen it from thy master's shelf.

Bosk. Thy shelf! the very spiders have forsaken it; the food was mine, a neighbour gave it me for charity, the money too!

Overy. Charity! what, am I to be disgraced by the cormorants that I warm at my hearth?

Bosk. Warm! thou never hadst a fire bigger than a

glow-worm's eye ; a match would take it away at its point ; a flint struck by a bodkin, would show more : thou hast had but one faggot since thou hast kept house, and have I not heard thee boast that thou would'st leave half of it to dower thy daughter ?

Overy. Thou eatest beyond all faith.

Bosk. Eat ! if starving be the true faith, a cameleon is an unbeliever to me.

Overy. Hence ! thou makest my blood——

Bosk. Blood ! cold water, master ! cold water ! nay, ice ; thou knowest that thou did'st once place thy hand upon a man scorched with a fever, and he straightway died with an ague.

Overy. To the ferry, sirrah ! to the ferry.

Bosk. Well, I'll hence ; but the money, master, I tell you is mine.

Overy. So much the better, I will see that it be yours, and if it be——

Bosk. You will return it ?

Overy. No : you last week broke the boat's gunwale ; 'twill serve to mend it.

Bosk. [*aside.*] What a dog is this ! I must even trust to my wit, since entreaty fails.

Overy. Stay, I have an errand for you.

Bosk. Is it to run to the butcher's ?

Overy. Glutton ! where's Leonard ? that boy eats more than any other of the family.

Bosk. It says a great deal for his ingenuity, I wish he'd intrust me with the secret.

Overy. He works not ; pries about, his ear at crevices, and his eye,—he has a subtle, an enquiring eye.

Bosk. Like to his father's—I've heard your daughter say so.

Overy. It is ; well, this house is no place for idlers—the boy must hence, let him go out into the world—hark'ye. Bosk, send him away this very night.

Bosk. Send him away ? why he is your dead son's only child ; there is orphan writ in every feature of his young face.

Overy. What is that to me ?

Bosk. True, I had forgotten—nothing.

Overy. Let him hence !—hence ! I say : he eats not my bread another day : away,—now for my borrower at the ferry.

[*Exeunt, C. D.*]

SCENE IV.—*A Street.*

Enter MAYFLY and PARROQUET, L.

Par. And how found you the old tortoise?

May. Even as you said, close, close as an oyster, and as dumb; but when I rattled security in his ear, the old wretch gaped, and talked of lending.

Par. And you gave him the bracelet which we stole from the travellers at Canterbury?—now, would it not be better, since our fortunes are grown desperate, and dissipation compels us to take a purse, to break in upon the hoards of the old jackdaw, Overy?

May. Anon, we'll talk of this—there are at present reasons against the adventure.

Par. I know; reasons, tricked in the garb of folly—a woman.

May. May be it is.

Par. Mary Overy, the ferry-man's daughter?

May. Well!

Par. By the mass, it were a good jest to see Robert Mayfly, son-in-law to the old miser.

May. I have a plot beyond your wit to fathom—stand aside, here comes one I would have some talk with.

[Parroquet retires.]

Enter TRISTAN, L.

Good day, gentle youth.

Tris. A good day, master.

May. Nay, whither so fast—you serve the Baron Fitzgeffrey I think?

Tris. Even so.

May. I hear, for I know him not, that he hath a free hand, a full purse, and, is it not so, a hawk's eye for a pretty woman?

Tris. And now you have summed up my master's qualities, what would you with him?

May. Serve him.

Tris. How?

May. In any business of honour or love. Tell me, doth he not sometimes send fair messages to the boatman's daughter, Mary Overy,—come, I see the blood mounts in your boy's cheek;—he doth: well, I can serve him; if he would possess the girl, he shall—let him hint the word, and she is within his grasp.

Tris. Villain!

May. Ha!

[*handling his sword.*]

Tris. My master needs not such service.

May. Indeed, I will be sure of that. [*Tristan looks contemptuously at him, and exit, R.*] A high bird for so young a one! but spite of all, I'll use Fitzgeffrey's word for the act—make in his name great offers to old Overy; then the Baron shares the shame, whilst I hold the prize for myself.

Enter BOSK, R.

Bosk. A plague on marble hearts and brains of snow, say I: not a door have I rapped at whose hinges did not creak, "no;"—turn out the child! I cannot do it—nor can I find the Christian charity that will give the little fellow house-room.

May. What, Bosk?

Bosk. Good master Mayfly, your servant.

May. What seek you, your master?

Bosk. Seek him! in faith, no,—evil comes soon enough, it needs no searcher.—My master! he is a rock—a fabric of skin and bones without a heart.

May. What! has he stinted thee of thy dinner, or threatened to send thee supperless to bed?

Bosk. Supper and dinner! they are words of a forgotten language. No, master, 'tis not for myself, but for the sake of little Leonard.

May. The boy—old Overy's grand-child?

Bosk. Aye, so says nature; she cries grand-child in the miser's ear, but men who only listen to the chink of money bags, are deaf to nature, use what words she may.

May. What has the boy done?

Bosk. Great iniquities in his day.

May. Aye?

Bosk. Marry, his little life is full of deadly sins. He hath devoured since he hath been born—two penny loaves, half a lamb's kidney, and the roe of a dried had-dock:—'tis his crime to eat, sir; my master would have all about him live like trees, on earth, water, and air: in a word, the boy must pack.

May. Where?

Bosk. There, Sir, is the question; I know not. The best way will be to bind him hand and foot, and leave him for the birds;—the young knave will eat—there is no remedy for it.

May. Will you trust the boy with me?

Bosk. Trust him? marry Sir, it's no compliment, I would trust him any where—but what purpose will you put him to?

May. Oh, he shall be my page,—when can I have him?

Bosk. Come with me, and straightway I'll put him into your keeping—use him well, I pray you, for 'tis an innocent thing, and was born under unfriendly stars; come, Sir. [Exit, L.]

May. This boy may further my purpose. Now then to make use of Fitzgeffrey's name, and to work upon the avarice of the ferryman. [Exit, L.]

SCENE III.—*The Miser's House.*

Enter MARY OVERY and LEONARD, L.

Leo. Nay, my dear aunt, weep not for me; I am strong and can labour; and fear not, but there are some charitable people who will look with kindness on me, and protect me.

Mary. Poor child, rejected from the hearth that ought to shelter you, where can you hope for succour?

Leo. Surely all men are not like my grand-father; nay, I am certain they are not; there is master Will Shafton, he is full of kindness.

Enter TRISTAN, C. D.

Tris. Mary!

Mary. Again here?

Tris. Nay, listen to me.

Mary. Not a word; when last you came upon your hateful errand, you left me subdued, softened beneath resentment,—now 'tis not thus with me—fresh misery, a new wretchedness has stung my heart, and it swells and overflows with bitterness.

Tris. Dismiss the fear, I offer friendship,—a plot is set on foot to betray you.

Mary. Unhappy girl—a plot—betray me—what have I done to excite this persecution?—what said you?

Tris. It is the eloquence of your beauty that prompts men—

Mary. Men! it is their savage nature that persuades them to the violence; the tyger would still be the tyger, tho' no lamb should cross its path. But, begone; away, I entreat you; I expect my father's return; there is another too, who must away, where heaven knows, I have no friend to—

Enter FITZGEFFREY, C. D.

Fitz. No friend ! am I forgotten ?

Mary. No, Shafton, no ; but in this you cannot serve me ; this boy, this poor innocent child, is about to be driven hence, without a place where he may shelter his orphan head.

Fitz. Poor lad ! be of good heart, I will take charge of him.

Mary. You !

Fitz. Aye, I will find means to recommend him to the Baron Fitzgeffrey.

Mary. Never !

Fitz. Why do you refuse ? you know not the Baron—

Mary. No matter ; I would sooner trust the child to the charity of the midnight tempest, than to the keeping of Baron Fitzgeffrey.

Fitz. You speak unadvisedly.

Mary. I would rather see the green grass upon the boy's grave, than Fitzgeffrey's livery on his limbs.

Enter BOSK, C. D.

Bosk. News ! rare news ! come away, my little master, I have a place for you.

Mary. Where would you take him, good Bosk ? will he be safe ?

Bosk. Safe ! can he change for the worse ? throw him upon a common—lodge him in an oak tree, or a bramble bush, and will he not fatten better than here ? Come along.

Fitz. But who is to take the lad ?

Bosk. A gay, spruce fellow enough, one master Mayfly.

Fitz. Mayfly ?

Bosk. Aye, a bird of the first plumage, I can tel you : he'll make a man of Leonard ; teach him to wear his hat knowingly—to draw his sword before there be good reason for it—to trim his beard, when he gets one, according to the last new cut, and to swear nothing but the choicest oaths of the choicest company. There is a stock of learning as times go, enough to make the court of aldermen ; nay, 'twould set up three Mayors, and leave something for the Sheriffs.

Mary. I cannot trust the boy with such a master.

Bosk. Cannot trust ? marry, you must, good Mary

Overy; if the boy remain here, your goodly father will beat him black and sell him for a negro—come, boy.

Mary. Bless you, poor child.

Bosk. Why, would not one think he was going to the Indies? why you shall see the boy fine as a parrot, once a-day, and if you will, twice on Saints' days and Sundays.—Come along.

Mary. Hark! the boatmen are returning—nay, then there is no remedy—farewell.

[*The hut door is thrown open and discovers a view river—moonlight.*]

Chorus of Boatmen.

The sun has set the owlet's cries,

Proclaim the day is flown;

The bat from yonder turret flies,

The mastiff 'gins to moan.

We hail the moon, she makes us blest

However fortune chide,

She lights the boatman to his rest,

His children—wife—fireside.

And 'ere we part, still by her light,

We grasp the hand, and cry—"Good-night."

[*All exeunt through centre door, except Mary.*]

End of Act I.

ACT II.

SCENE I.—*Overy's House.*

Enter OVERY, L.

Overy. If I can get her in the mind—if? she must, *shall!* 'tis a bright promise,—a golden fortune; the Baron's agents offer well—'tis well too I know not, have not seen him—he is rich, bedded in wealth;—ha! yet if the trick serve, I'll pluck this peacock of his plumes.

Enter MARY OVERY, R.

Come hither, girl.—Mary, the world deals hardly with us: I am old and poor, very poor. I, in my grave, and what will become of thee?

Mary. Heaven, that watches o'er the desolate, will be my safeguard.

Overy. Mary.

Mary. Father!

Overy. The gallants tell me thou hast beauty.

Mary. Sir?

Overy. In this world of shew, beauty is a marketable commodity, and 'twould be a pity to spoil merchandize by overkeeping.

Mary. Father, there is a mystery in your words—a chilling terror in your looks—a wildness, which I dare not name, is glaring in your eyes;—father, father, what mean you?

Overy. Why, what's the matter? What tempest is this? Art thou mad? I would speak to thee of mending thy fortune—is not my counsel worth the hearing?

Mary. I will be calm, Sir; go on.

Overy. Girl, dost thou know how this fine world is built?

Mary. The world, Sir? it is to me, as a region whereof I have heard various tales.

Overy. I have watched the world with eyes of manhood nearly two score years, and what have I seen? They call me miser, hang-dog, grey-haired wolf—it pleases me they should do so;—the world! there was a time when I looked upon it with a melting eye—a throbbing heart;—I painted it a garden of flowers—I found it a heap of ashes. What did I see? the weak smote down, and goaded by the strong—virtue shivering in the winds—vices swathed in ermine;—the knave's head plumed and glistening with diamonds—poor honesty shoeless and unbonnetted; he, whose tongue gave utterance to his heart, shunned like a pestilence, or hunted like a beast—he, who would lick the hand of fools, or hum a lie within the ear of crime, clothed with the richest—fed with the best. I saw this, and my heart grew hard, my eye sullen; I asked the cause of so much baseness, so much unmerited contempt?—I asked, what is it, that gets up these mockeries of life, dividing man against man—placing fetters on the lowly—crowns upon the proud?—A thousand voices answered “gold! gold!” The sound sunk deeply in my heart—it brooded o'er the word;—every feeling, every sense, fell down and mutely worshipped the new-found secret: from that moment I became what I now am.

Mary. A grievous change.

Overy. A goodly one. I am now the master—I might have been the slave. Mary, listen; you shall be rich; nay, think not I mean from my store—my coffin shall be no gold-mine to you.

Mary. May heaven pardon you for thus harshly judging me.

Overy. What! I have seen expectant heirs. Do I not know the son counts the wrinkles in his rich father's cheek—smiles as the old man creeps day by day with weakened pace,—and laughs, with a long, loud, deep laugh, as the earth rattles down upon his parent's bier?—No, you shall coin wealth from your own beauty.

Mary. In mercy, Sir, speak your purpose.

Overy. The Baron Fitzgeffrey—why, how now, art palsy-stricken, that thou turnest so pale?

Mary. On, Sir; on, I beseech you.

Overy. The Baron loves you.

Mary. And would wed me?

Overy. Humph!

Mary. Father, you gave me life—watched me thro' childhood—have, for I strive to remember such hours, called blessings on my infant head,—have looked at me, as none but fathers look upon the babes they love, and can you now—Oh, I cannot name the horror—had an angel said thus much, I had spurned it; being my father I kneel. [*kneels to him.*]

Overy. Peevish fool!—you do mistake—

Mary. Father! I disclaim you! [*takes hair-braid from her neck.*] This hair is your's, you gave it to my mother—her dying fingers placed it round my neck—she bade me wear it—bade me love you;—her spirit that hath witnessed your profanation, would frown upon me did I longer bear it. [*casts the braid at Overy's feet.*]

Overy. Mary! my daughter!

Mary. Call me not daughter—the word will blight thy tongue!—I cast thee off—my blood forgets its source,—master Overy, thou art a childless man. [*Exit, R.*]

Overy. Mary! Mary! thou dost me wrong,—thou—What, can I weep? a tear! hence, 'tis a libel on my heart.

Enter SHOTBOLT, L.

What dost thou here?

Shot. Marry, am I not a cur of thy keeping? why not here?

Overy. Hark'ye, Shotbolt; thou hast a friendship for thy young mistress?

Shot. Aye, friendship, if that must be the word.

Overy. Thou would'st see her well i' the world?

Shot. In faith, would I.

Overy. The Baron Fitzgeffrey loves her.

Shot. As eagles love lambs—cats, mice ;—has the Baron told thee thus much ?

Overy. No ; but two of his confidents have ; he would carry her off—I have consented.

Shot. Thou liest !

Overy. What ?

Shot. Thou are not such a thrice-dyed villain.

Overy. Hast thou no fear ?

Shot. Hast thou none, that a black brain may work under grey hairs, and yet 'scape the thunder ? Darest thou tell this tale to me, and hast no fear, that I, thy servant, should strike thee sprawling on the earth thou taintest ?

Overy. Knave, hear me !

Shot. Aye, go on ; thou can'st add no jot to what I've heard already.

Overy. 'Tis but a plot of mine to make Fitzgeffrey pay for his violence ! I have not seen the Baron—know him not ; two of his retainers have proposed for him : now I would but throw my daughter in his way, and 'ere he could carry her off, seize upon him in the attempt—then complain to the king, who would levy a fine upon Fitzgeffrey, which might serve for Mary's dowry, for some humble, honest man, you hear, good Shotbolt. [*aside.*] The fool bites at that.

Shot. A shrewd plot, i'faith.

Overy. Is't not ? yet Mary will not hear of it ; even now she left me full of tears and anger.

Shot. Leave her to me, good master ; I'll so reason with her that she cannot fail to do as you would have her.

Overy. 'Tis well. Mayfly and his companions will be here anon, habited as two of the holy brotherhood of St. Francis. I have told them the disguise is necessary. Mary sometimes visits the abbess of the neighbouring convent. Mayfly can feign a message from her, if there be no means of pacifying the girl, and thus, spite of herself, make her act in the plot. They are to bear Mary down the river, land a few miles off, and there the Baron will meet them : Mary will doubtless cry for succour, then you and your fellows——

Shot. But as thou hast never seen the Baron, may he not deny that his servants acted by his commands ?

Overy. How can he, when he shall be found aiding them in bearing away my daughter ?

Shot. A rare plot! but are you sure that Fitzgeffrey will be fined? What will avail the complaint of a ferryman's daughter against a haughty Baron?

Overy. It may be so; but he cannot take back the earnest, I've already gained; eh, good Shotbolt, ha! ha! The Baron is duped any way—the gull, the fool of the old Thames' Ferryman. But away; prepare Mary, plead well, who knows how much it may stead thee? [*aside.*] That was well put—it tickles him—he's mine. [*Exit, L.*]

Enter BOSK, R.

Bosk. How now, Shotbolt, thinking of thy fortune?

Shot. Marry, 'tis not worth the trouble.

Bosk. Nay, then, thou art a fool not to mend it. Thou art out of thy 'prenticeship, and yet thou art content to stay here on no wages and less food; and for what? for the look of Mary Overy—a girl that cares no more for thee than for the Mogul.

Shot. Thou art a fool, Bosk; I care not for the girl.

Bosk. All the better; thou wilt grieve less for the loss of her.

Shot. The loss of her! The loss of Mary?

Bosk. Good Shotbolt, when young women put themselves into nunneries, for, what they are pleased to say, the good of their souls, dost thou not think they pay us men a very scurvy compliment? I never could find out the reason for thus shutting up a large stock of the fair sex; unless, indeed, it is as we garner up corn,—in case of a time of famine.

Shot. But Mary?

Bosk. Marry, she's going to leave the world. I thought she would wed with master Shafton; but no, 'tis but a minute, and she ran, with tears swimming in her eyes, from her father, and sent me with a letter to the Abbess of St. Ursula's convent, praying admission. The Abbess has consented, and a friar, I suppose one of the Abbess's select friends, will, in a few minutes, come to take young mistress hence.

Shot. Mary a nun!—it cannot be!

Bosk. Why so one would think, considering the selection she might make from her acquaintance.—But I must hence and deliver my message; alas! this will be a rare hut when mistress Mary leaves us: she did sometimes sprinkle a few crumbs in our way, but those days of plenty are now no more. [*Exit, R.*]

ENTER OVERY. L.

Overy. Shotbolt, now, what says Mary?

Shot. What says she?

Overy. Aye, have you not questioned her?

Shot. [*aside.*] How to answer him!—Yes, yes, she consents.

Overy. Good lad, good lad; Mayfly is at hand—I'll hence, and give him the signal.

Shot. Stay—I'll lead her here and leave her; stand you aloof.

Overy. Aye, and now my wily Baron, I have over-matched you. [*Exit, L.*]

Shot. You shall do so; even more than you suppose. [*Exit, L.*]

Enter MAYFLY, as a monk, at C. D. and MARY veiled in a long black veil, R.

Mary. Ah! already here!

May. Daughter, I come to give you counsel, the evening closes in, and—

Mary. Father, I attend you. I thought I could have left this place without a tear; I thought I could have turned from this scene of misery and desolation, without a single throbbing of the heart. I cannot; some mystic power yet holds me to this spot—objects, familiar from the hours of infancy, seem to beckon me to stay; there is a mute eloquence in the very walls.

May. Come.

Mary. Where is my father?

May. See! where he stands! [*pointing off.*]

Mary. Alas! he knows not my determination, nor would I have him until I am safely made a daughter of the church.

May. [*aside.*] A daughter of the church! what means she?—Haste!

Mary. But one more look—my father! Another moment!—now, now I am wholly thine.

[*Music.—Mayfly leads her off, C. D.*]

Enter PARROQUET, R. disguised as a friar.

Par. A plague on that Mayfly, I am here before him: if I but get the girl, he shall pay roundly for her. Eh! who's this? 'tis she by my hopes! If she be well instructed now by that cur, her father, she will trip by my side like a tame lamb.

Enter SHOTBOLT, L. disguised in a cloak.

Shot. [*aside.*] Is this now the true friar, or one of the minions?

Par. Daughter!

Shot. [*aside.*] 'Tis one of them.

[*Music.*—*Shotbolt signifies that he is ready to depart.*—

Exeunt, C. D.

Enter OVERY, L.

Overy. They are gone! Shotbolt! Shotbolt! why Shotbolt! he heeds me not—Shotbolt! not here? he should follow with his fellows and watch, lest—Ah, if he should not, and Fitzgeffrey!—oh, then were I damned indeed!—What ails me? my heart swells, and my old sinews stiffen,—there's mist before my eyes, and the blood sings in my ears.

Enter FATHER ROBERT, C. D.

F. Rob. Peace be upon this house!

Overy. What mummerly is this? answer, where have you taken Mary?

F. Rob. Speakest thou of thy daughter?

Overy. Curses on thee! of whom should I speak?

F. Rob. Suppress thy wrath—I come to take her hence.

Overy. Come! know'st not she is gone?

F. Rob. Gone! whither? with whom?

Overy. With thy fellow! Tell me, whither! I meant not what I said,—here is the gold, [*gives bag.*] I was mad when I did promise.

F. Rob. And mad art thou now, old man.

Overy. What! dost thou scoff me? [*rushing to him.*] My daughter!

F. Rob. Madman! read this. [*gives letter.*] It is a prayer from thy child for refuge with the daughters of St. Ursula. I come to take her hence—I come to wed her to the church.

Overy. Aye, and to dower her with her dead father's gold, if—if—he had any [*snatches the bag from him.*] But, no! if wealth were mine, it should be confined with me, rot beside my corse, 'ere one doit should cross thy monkish fingers!

F. Rob. Heaven be upon you; farewell! [*Exit, C. D.*

Overy. No, no, leave me not, I am old and wayward; my daughter! Oh! Mary! Mary!

Enter FITZGEFFREY, C. D.

Fitz. Mary! what of her?

Overy. Lost!

Fitz. Dead?

Overy. No, no; would she were! Had she tenanted heaven but one hour, I had then been saved.

Fitz. Not dead! yet lost!

Overy. Aye; she lives, yet I have murdered her! 'Tis a foul riddle; seek not to know it.

Fitz. For mercy's sake, speak! your acts are of madness!

Overy. They are. I thought this breast was granite,—these veins iron—my blood venom! alas! I am yet human [*wildly.*] My wits, my wits!

Fitz. As you hope for heaven——

Overy. Dumbness strike thy tongue! Heaven! when I shall seek its bar, the lightning of her glance will strike me down, down to perdition! there, her eyes, fixed eternally upon me, will, like coals of living fire, eat into my heart!

Enter NEIGHBOURS, C. D.

1st. Neigh. Master Overy, is your daughter abroad?

Overy. Yes; what of her?

1st. Neigh. I thought 'twas she; a woman, escorted, or rather forced into a boat by a man, has gone down the river.

Overy. Get horses, and ride along the banks—launch every boat and follow, I'll reward you with gold, gold! no, no; I rave. [*a bag falls from his girdle—he throws himself over it.*] I have no gold; I am a poor, weak, desolate old man—I'll give you my prayers.

1st. Neigh. And enough too in such a cause; come, lads!

Fitz. Here! here is money, neighbours!

Overy. [*takes bag from him.*] I will reward them and give thee what remains. But, my child! save her or Fitzgeffrey——

Fitz. Fitzgeffrey!

Overy. Aye, 'tis to him I have sold her 'tis to his minions.

Fitz. [*aside.*] Fitzgeffrey! either my name is abused by villains, or the old man utters madness. Come, friends!

Overy. Away! away! I'll follow.

[*Overy forces them out, C. D. hides money in his garment, and exit, C. D.*

SCENE II.—*Interior of a ruined building.*

Enter DAGGER and PARROQUET, from a recess L. C. F.

Par. Aye, there she is safe, until Mayfly come to claim her; the loitering fool, where can he be hidden?

Dag. Fool!—nay, the wisdom between you is but little, I take it;—What, in the name of roguery, has either he or thou to do with this girl?

Par. Marry, I know not; yet he tells me 'twill be the means of shaking the old man's money-bags. But, come, let us take a turn down the bank, and see where Mayfly's loitering.

Dag. But the girl?

Par. Nay, she's safe enough; could she, if she would, break thro' yon oaken door?—Come.

[*Exeunt, L. U. E.*

Music.—*Shotbolt is heard within breaking down the door*
L. he runs in—a bar in his hand.

Shot. The villains! still I am undiscovered! this bar left on the floor of my dungeon, has given me means to break my prison:—but Mary!—ah! who comes hither? Strangers in earnest talk!—I'll to my hiding place again, lest suddenness defeat my purpose. [*retires.*

Enter OFFICER, BALDWIN, and WOLSTAND.

Offi. You would know the knaves again, masters?

Bald. Know them? Aye:—they were a brace of sparkish lads—gay, painted robbers, who took our purses with the air of ambassadors.

Wol. Nay, let the purses go; I care not for mine. But to be robbed of that diamond bracelet! stones of such water were not in all Britain. Come, if we loiter here, we shall not cross the river ere 'tis midnight. Can you tell me the name of the ferryman who plies at the next station?

Offi. Aye; old John Overy.

Wol. What! then he hath played at bo-peep with death till now? Tell me; he is a jovial, free-hearted old man; is he not?—Why do you laugh? Is it a miracle for an old man to have a smile upon his cheek?

Offi. It would be with the old ferryman. You know him not, Sir, or you would spare your questions—free-hearted! a flint will shew fire, an' you strike it hard enough; but warmth from John Overy!—ha! ha! 'tis a good jest, Sir.

Wol. [*aside.*] Still the same I find. But, come; whilst we prate the night is darkening: we've had nought but ill-luck since our adventure at Canterbury;—fortune may have better store for us in London. [*Exeunt, L.*]

Enter MAYFLY, disguised as a monk, and MARY, who is enveloped in a black cloak similar to that worn by Shotbolt.

Mary. Alas! there is some fearful mystery; why not take me straightway to the convent?

May. I have a call of charity to make within this neighbourhood. [*aside.*] Where can they be?

Enter PARROQUET, L.

[*Mary retires up stage inspecting the building.*]

Where have you loitered?

Par. 'Tis I should ask that question;—what! [*seeing Mary.*] is she at liberty?

May. Why not?

Par. As you please; I thought 'twere best to coop her up; 'tis your affair not mine.

May. Are the horses ready?

Par. They are.

May. Away then; I'll follow instantly. [*Exit Parroquet, O. P.*] Now, daughter.

Mary. Hence! I do suspect you!

May. Suspect! doth not my garb—

Mary. Hide a traitorous purpose! I will hence.

May. Pardon, gentle daughter, 'tis to heaven I am now accountable for your safety.

Mary. It is; and did I believe such were your thoughts, I yet would trust you. All that have heaven on their lips, bear not its charities within their hearts;—misery hath made me circumspect—farewell!

May. Hold! you do not stir!

Mary. Who shall prevent me?

May. That which hath decoyed thee here—love!

Mary. Love!

May. Aye, fierce unconquerable love!

Mary. Miscreant! where is thy oath to heaven? is not thy lip pale that breathes the word? love! thou perjured villain! hence! I loathe, scorn, and defy you!

May. Call me not perjured, Mary Overy; think not a priest, a poor bead-counting monk, demands thy love; no, behold! what seest thou now? [*throws off cloak.*]

Mary. A serpent that hath crept from out a temple, on which were writ the words of truth and peace!

May. Thou seest I have broken no vow with heaven!
I am free as the wind!

Mary. There is a load of guilt upon thy felon heart!
I see it in thy wolfish eyes—within their light, I read thy
wicked purpose!—thy lip is trembling 'neath the guilt
thy heart would utter!

May. I have loved thee long; 'tis true I am ruined in
fortune—thanks to my own folly, and the usury of thy
good conscientious sire!

Mary. Thou art a brave man!—thou stealest away the
daughter, and to soothe her in her misery, dost abuse
her father!

May. I meant not so: I have loved thee dearly! I
found thee——

Mary. Aye, hold there! how did'st thou find me?
I stood an orphan in my father's house!—there was no
refuge for me but the altar of my faith! I flew to em-
brace it—I thought I clasped it in my arms, when thou,
like a fiend of darkness, did'st rise before me! the vision
vanished—the dream was past.—I conjure thee, if pity
is not wholly exiled from thy heart, forego thy ruthless
purpose! let me seek my father!

May. Thy father! to turn from me to him were but a
scurvy change: thou hast no father; what think you if
a parent should strike a bargain—a bargain full of crime?

Mary. A bargain! say'st thou?—dost thou name it,
and do not blushes scorch thy cheeks to blackness?

May. I tell thee thy father sold thee.

Mary. Monster! thou darest not say so o'er a father's
grave, or the buried man would leap up before thee!

May. This is madness!—come, Mary Overy, mine
you are—mine you shall remain!

Mary. Mercy! mercy! I am a poor, weak, desolate
woman! let my tears be my weapons and disarm your
cruelty!

[*whistle without.*]

May. Ah! some one approaches! come, I'm resolved!
[*attempts to seize her—she springs from him, at the same
time snatching a dagger from his belt.*] Foolish girl; if
I speak but a word, you are upon my horse's back!

Mary. That word may be spoken, but thy steed shall
bear a corse!

May. [*approaching.*] Trifling!—come.

Mary. Stand back!—approach but one step, and my
blood shall gush upon thy face!

[*whistle without.*]

May. Thus I defeat your madness!

[*Rushes to her—snatches the dagger from her hand ; she flies up the stage—he follows her, when Shotbolt comes between them ; at this moment Parroquet and Dagger run on, R. U. E.*

Shot. Villains! stand off! Mary Overy, tremble not; if they would touch thee, girl, they must trample o'er my corse!

May. Boaster!

[*The three attack Shotbolt, who defends himself with the bar ; they overpower him ; Mayfly pursues Mary, when old Overy runs on, receives her on one arm, and opposes himself to Mayfly ; at the same moment Fitzgeffrey throws himself before the prostrate Shotbolt and the Officer, Wolstand and Baldwin, who have entered, secure Parroquet and Dagger.*

Overy. My child, Mary! thou art safe!—ha! ha! forgive, forgive, thy old father!

Wol. [*recognizing Mayfly and Parroquet.*] Officer, behold the robbers! seize them! Villains! where is our gold? where my diamonds?

May. I confess the theft; but I had accomplices:—you'd have your diamonds? look there!

[*Mayfly points to Overy, whose sleeve in the conflict has been torn apart, and who bears upon his arm the stolen jewels.*

Wol. They are mine, mine!

[*Rushing to seize them from Overy.*

Overy. Thine! no, take my heart!—lop off my hands! pluck out my beard!—but my wealth, my wealth!—no, no; I have no wealth but this!—'tis mine! mine! my all!—

Wol. Officer, seize him!

Overy. Never! I am old, poor—but my diamonds! diamonds! [*Officer and Wolstand struggle with Overy, and tear the diamonds from him.*] Villains! destroy an old man! and you, my daughter! all see me robbed, nor stir a foot? curses on you! you have my diamonds! take all, take all!

[*Pulls out a bag of money, which he frantically grasps at, tears open, and the gold falls upon the stage.*

Ha! villains! touch it not, touch it not! my gold! my gold! my gold!

[*In a paroxysm of madness, he throws himself down, as*

though he would cover the money ; with one hand he grasps some of the coin, and lifts up the other as to attack whoever may approach.—Picture. End of Act II.

ACT III.

SCENE I.—*View of the Ferry.*

Enter WOLSTAND and BALDWIN, L. S. E.

Bald. What ! have we seen wonders abroad, only to be out-wondered at home ?

Wol. At home ! plague upon it ! I might as well have died of a good old age in Arabia, or in Greenland, as to come to Britain to be suddenly killed with shame and vexation.

Bald. But you ever knew your brother Overy to be a close, lynx-eyed miser ?

Wol. Aye, he was so ; but I hoped otherwise. What do I find ? why, that thy nephew, master Mayfly, a gull, hath thrown away his patrimony—hath turned thief, and robbed us of gold and diamonds ; and that my brother, he, whom I have slept with in the same cradle, receives the stolen pelf ! Still I pardon that ; but to send his little grandchild abroad into the world !

Bald. Never heed ; now you have the boy safe with you.

Wol. Yes ; and if I find I cannot waken one thought of kindness in old Overy's heart, I'll make the child my sole heir.

Bald. You will lose your pains to tamper with your brother.

Wol. I know not ; as yet he has not discovered me, I will disguise myself in tatters,—call upon him—invent a story of his brother's misery ;—if he shew a tear no bigger than a needle's point,—

Bald. Find tears in John Overy ! if you do, I shall have hopes of fire in snow.

Enter SHOTBOLT, L.

Wol. Now, good fellow, is your master yet set free ?

Shot. Aye ; if you call it freedom to cut the pearl out, and then throw the fish back again to the waters.

Wol. What riddle have you ?

Shot. A riddle that will make my master, madman, when he resolves it : Sir, he hath been fined two hundred pounds for the robbery ;—his daughter hath paid the money to save the old man from a life of slavery.

Wol. But did she not pay it with the old man's consent?

Shot. His consent! Would you ask the eagle for its eyes, or the adder for its sting?—his consent!—after much searching, the girl found the old man's hoard, and ransomed him from that. It will be mirth for the fiends to see the miser kneeling over his empty chest.

Wol. Mirth, indeed; and if I mistake not, I'll make one at the merriment.—Come, Baldwin. Friend, a good day to you; you have an honest brow, though a rough one;—we may meet another time.

[*Exeunt Wolstand and Baldwin, R.*]

Shot. Aye, and if not, all is one I take it. Now, Shotbolt, resolve thee; thou hast long loved Mary Overy; perhaps she owes thee some gratitude for snatching her from that tawdry villain! but I scorn her gratitude.—No! if she will give me her love, why, 'twill be my happiness; if not, I'll stay no longer starving on her looks—tortured by her sweet voice! I'll leave her father's service, and strive, tho' it will be a hard task, a most hard task, to forget her.

[*Enter TRISTAN, L.*]

Tris. Friend, I would speak with you.

Shot. I dare say; a man can rarely walk abroad and he is not chattered to by pies or parrots.

Tris. Nay, fair words.

Shot. I am no dealer in honey: you serve the Baron Fitzgeffrey—art sworn friend to Will Shafton, the Baron's falconer;—a good-day, my sleek young Sir.

[*Exit, R. U. E.*]

Tris. A jealous man, but an honest one,—poor fellow, he will soon, too soon, know his fortune. The Baron is now determined on the marriage, lest Mary should, in a rash moment, again seek to immure herself within a convent;—ha! who comes here?

[*Enter LEONARD, L. habited as a Page.*]

What, my young friend! Whither away?

Leo. First to see my dear aunt Mary, ere my grandfather get home; and then to return to my new master, the rich merchant.

Tris. 'Tis well you have left your first.

Leo. It is indeed!—I was never happy with him:—he was always asking me such odd questions—where my grandfather put his money?—when my aunt went abroad, where she walked? and if she had many

suitors? with other talk, much of which, I did not understand.—I dare say master Mayfly will wish me to serve him again, for I hear he has made friends who have released him from prison. But, no! I shall stay with the rich merchant—he has made me his page, and promised to be very good to me.

Tris. His page!—but do you know the duties of a page?

Leo. No; they are but light ones.

Tris. Light ones! in faith, it's a calling of great trust and dignity; but come with me, and I will catechise you.

[*Exeunt, R.*]

SCENE II.—*The house of Overy.*

OVERY *rushes in, C. D.*

Overy. I am again at home! my curses wither the knaves!—that Mayfly—oh, an old man! yet to be the fool of youngers!—now, now, to my coffers!—ha! who's here?

Enter SHOTBOLT, L.

Shot. Thou art welcome home, Sir.

Overy. Thou liest, knave!—thou would'st have had me rot in a gaol! had not my daughter, good girl!—had not her prayers released me!

Shot. [*aside.*] Aye, prayers, and thy good gold.

Overy. What dost thou mutter?

Shot. And thy prayers too, I said;—doubtless thou did'st pray for thy liberty?

Overy. Pray!—never will I pray again!

Shot. Master!

Overy. Never!—good angels turn from me! fiends laugh at me!—I have tried to pray!

Shot. Thou hast?

Overy. Aye, 'twas in my dreams:—I sought Saint Francis' shrine; the chapel was lighted up; a thousand tapers flung their brightness on me; clouds of incense rolled about me; music burst as from a thousand angel throats—there was a rustling of wings:—I looked around, and the statues of the saints, that but a moment seemed to smile, now squinted a horrid scorn upon me;—they seemed to heave and swell as metal 'neath the fire—they turned to gold—to bright dazzling gold;—all was changed;—the walls whereon I gazed—the altar that I clasped—the roof that covered me—the floor whereon I kneeled—all, all was gold!—the angels sang no more,

but there was gold!—I could not breathe—my heart beat—I heard it in that horrid silence knock against my breast ;—two pilgrims' rods, changed to glitt'ring metal, lay beside me ;—I snatched them up—they turned to snakes, and twisting round my arms and feet, held me a prisoner, hissing in my face ;—the statues glared fiercely, oped their yellow jaws, and laughed, laughed at me—I shrieked, shrieked, and awoke !

Shot. Frightful !

Overy. Never will I pray again ! hence ! begone !

Shot. A word, Sir ; I saved your daughter—have long loved her,—will you consent that I shall wed her ?

Overy. Wed!—away I cannot jest now.

Shot. You refuse ?

Overy. I love not a race of beggars : there be fools enough to bear rags ;—Mary shall not add to the number.

Shot. Farewell ! with to-morrow, my service ends.
[*aside.*] Still I will ask my fate of Mary ; if she deny, I know my task.

[*Exit, L.*

Overy. He's gone—now, now for my store !

Enter MARY, R.

Mary. My dear, loved father !

[*runs to him.*

Overy. She here ? Mary !

Mary. Thou art again under thine own roof!—again with thine own child !

Overy. My own child!—would'st thou not have left me?—thrown thyself into a nunnery, that the goodly sisterhood might have poisoned thy father for his wealth?—yet, Mary, 'twas well done to get me released—'twas well done,—how did'st compass it ?

Mary. With supplications, tears.

Overy. Aye, 'twas good, very good ; and they were melted with thy words ? I heard so ; thou did'st bravely, vench !

Mary. Alas ! they were most unkind. Those who decided upon thy fate, told me thou must become a bondsman for life, unless—

Overy. Well !

Mary. From thy hoards—

Overy. Hoards ! what hoards ?

Mary. Thou did'st pay two hundred pounds.

Overy. Two hundred pounds!—ha ! ha ! ha ! pleasant adges ; Was such wealth ere heard of?—did'st not laugh at them, girl ? Why thou answerest not!—speak !

Mary. Thou would'st have been a prisoner for life!

Overy. For eternity!—for such a sum, a slave, the lowest slave, that ever sold his eyes, tongue, heart, would be paid beyond all thought—two hundred pounds.—But thou tremblest and lookest white.

Mary. Father, father! thy judges were about to condemn thee!—a minute more, and thou would'st have been serf!—Father! dost thou love me?

Overy. Thou knowest it.

Mary. Say, I had been in thy place—the victim of deceit! that I, thine own child, about to receive a brand of infamy!—a lifetime of servitude! and yet the shame, and days, and nights of grievous toil, might be by so much gold prevented, what would'st thou have done?

Overy. Two hundred pounds.

Mary. Thy child on one hand, the gold on the other, which would'st thou have ta'en?

Overy. [*abstractedly.*] Two hundred pounds.

Mary. Then have I, in thy judgment, erred.

Overy. What would'st thou?

Mary. I gave the money.

Overy. Thou did'st not;—what! two hundred pounds!—did'st borrow them? or did'st steal—

Mary. Steal!—no! for the gold I took belonged to the unworthy—it was my father's—

Overy. Thou say'st not?

Mary. [*pointing off.*] The chest

Overy. Ha! [*rushes up to box—lays it down, and throws open lid—finding it empty.*] I am blind! [*staggers from the box—after a moment.*] Devils! ha! traitress! destroyer! thou hast murdered thy father!—death for death!

[*Snatches a knife from his girdle—the girl sinks on her knees,—Overy is madly rushing to her, when Shotbolt entering from L. wing, intercepts him, and wrests the knife from his hand.*]

Shot. Dost thou shake with rage or palsy? hence!—cover thy grey hair with ashes—fall down, beg forgiveness of heaven, but dare not raise thine eyes to it! Old man of gold and blood,—stab thine own child?—The wolf shames thee! and the bear growls scorn upon thee!—hence! [*gives him knife.*] and with the knife thou would'st have warmed within thy daughter's heart,—go—scratch thyself a grave!

Overy. My servant!

Shot. Thy master!—tho' I were chained, blinded, tongue-tied, and thou, a crowned king, did'st sit upon a throne of adamant, still, still thy master!

Overy. Furies seize thee, madman! I am brain-struck;—she hath despoiled me—broken my heart—given me to want, misery!—my gold! my gold!—I'll have revenge!—my gold! my gold! [*Exit, R.*]

Shot. Nay, Mary, come—do not tremble girl; the old man is gone,—he can hardly stand these fits of passion long.

Mary. Miserable daughter!

Shot. Mary, I know not fine words to woo with;—there may be some who would speak braver phrases to thee;—but none, none, who could put more heart into them.—Mary, I love you.

Mary. [*coldly.*] With a brother's love?

Shot. With a brother's love!—a broth—it is enough; Mary Overy, it is enough.—I am a stern uncultivated man, with no kindness of the world to temper me; yet shalt thou find my love was of that pure devoted nature, that speaking once, and finding no echo to its hopes, it took an honourable, tho' painful silence, and ne'er offended twice;—farewell!

Mary. What would you? you will not leave me?

Shot. No, Mary, I love thee too well; tho' thou can'st never be mine, yet will I watch thy safety. Thou may'st soon, bless another; nay, redden not—I will wait until then—wait until thou art safe from a father's avarice, and then adieu! I would not hear that tongue after it had uttered aye to another.

[*Exit, L.*]

Mary. Brave man! but 'tis in vain—Shafton has my faith; will be here soon to have my final pledge.—It would surely seem that heaven punished me for my forgetfulness of his affection, when in the hour of my anguish and disappointment, I sought to unite myself to the church: who comes hither? my father!—the sinking of my heart,—oh, bitter warning, tells me it is he—I will avoid him, for there is peril in his presence! [*Exit, C. D.*]

SCENE III.—*A Street in London.*

Enter TRISTAN and BOSK, L.

Bosk. Well, I cannot blame her, yet it is somewhat sudden;—yesterday she was for flying to a convent, and to-day she is to be married.

Tris. Aye, but be silent, good Bosk, till the ceremony is passed;—master Shafton hath now gone to Mary—'tis but a few paces to the church,—and in a few minutes—

Bosk. Yes, I know, when marriage is the order, much mischief may be done in a quarter of an hour.—How surprised old Overy will be.

Tris. There will be other starers I take it besides the miser.

Bosk. What, is there a secret? There is, I'm sure of it; and you look as if keeping it, made you uncomfortable;—can I assist you to carry it? I'm close—close as my ferry-boat.

Tris. Time is the grand discover, master Bosk,—good-day.

Bosk. You will not trust me?

Tris. With my own secret I might, but not my master's. [Exit, R.]

Bosk. His master's!—now what can his master, the baron Fitzgeffrey, have to do with the marriage of his falconer, Will Shafton, with Mary Overy?

Enter MAYFLY, L. dressed in mean apparel.

May. Bosk.

Bosk. What dost thou honour me with acknowledgments yet?

May. And why not?

Bosk. Oh, I am glad to find you have no pride; I thought that imprisonment and fining for theft—don't jump, man, I said theft—might have put you above a poor honest varlet like myself.—In truth, those prison walls must be ugly things,—why they have rubbed all the metal off your worship.

May. Where is the old scoundrel?

Bosk. Marry, the oldest scoundrel I know, is but a marvellous little way from me.

May. Where is Overy, your master?

Bosk. Scraping silver pennies, or extracting gold from the scales of trout, to make up for his losses.

May. Is he at home? I would see him.

Bosk. Take a friend's word—go not there.

May. Why not?

Bosk. He will tear thee piecemeal.

May. Why so?

Bosk. Why so! why does one cur fly at another?

May. Dost bark, hound?

Bosk. No; the hound barks not at a worm—but turning from it, leaves the crawler in its dirt [*Exit, R.*]

May. 'Tis near the hour—Parroquet and Dagger are at hand, and now, the miser's heaps cannot escape us.
[*Exit, R.*]

SCENE IV.—*Overy's House.*

Enter WOLSTAND, disguised in rags, and BALDWIN, C. D.

Bald. Let me dissuade you from the attempt.

Wol. No; I am determined on the project.

Bald. As you will;—but for that ungrateful nephew of mine, Mayfly, he shall never know his uncle was so near him;—I'd sooner give every penny to the monks—then you are resolved?

Wol. I am—leave me;—I will meet you anon.

[*Exit Baldwin, C. D.*]

This is a wretched hut, indeed;—and hither comes the more wretched owner.

[*Music.—Retires.—Enter OVERY, R. he appears considerably more debilitated than in the former scene: his whole demeanour is that of a wild imbecility.*]

Overy. The sky has poured its maledictions on me;—my gold! my darling blessed gold! melts like snow from my grasp!—I have lived years of torture in the last day;—had I been bound to a stake, the fires curling up around me, it had been bliss;—my daughter slights me—my daughter—did I not hold the knife to her breast? but then she robbed me!—robbed me! [*turns round, sees Wolstand at his side.*] Ah! a thief, a thief! would'st steal from me——

Wol. Old man, I come in honesty of purpose.

Overy. In honesty!—ha' ha! 'tis the word they all rob under. What dost thou here? this roof shelters not thy rags.

Wol. Had'st thou not a brother?

Overy. No, no; no brother—no father—no one—I want no one.

Wol. Thou had'st a brother!

Overy. Thou say'st so.

Wol. I come from him.

Overy. A leech, a leech! that would hang upon me—not a penny—not a penny——

Wol. 'Tis twenty years since he quitted England,—he went to India.

Overy. The land of gold, of precious gems—the paradise of the world;—I know it.

Wol. Became rich,—very rich.

Overy. My brother! very rich!—my loved brother rich, rich!—does he live?—if not, and he has no children, I am his heir!—I have proof, certain proof.

Wol. He yet lives.

Overy. Yet lives!—but, rich, rich; would he were here!—rich, rich!

Wol. No!

Overy. Not?

Wol. Reverses of trade have beggared him!

Overy. The fool! had money, and a beggar! go, thou makest me sick at heart.

Wol. Thy brother is now in London—wilt thou serve him?

Overy. I serve!—crushed by poverty!—beaten down by wrongs!

Wol. Wilt thou send him money?

Overy. Wilt thou make me mad?

Wol. But thy brother.

Overy. Devil!

Wol. [*gives purse.*] Here then is gold!

Overy. What!

Wol. [*aside.*] Yet, one more trial of his nature.

Overy. [*having inspected purse.*] It is gold!

Wol. Thy brother is poor, but I, tho' it may not seem so, am rich!—he will be here anon; lay out that money in a feast to welcome him.

Overy. What!—all!—'twere a sin as bad as murder!—all!

Wol. Every penny.

Overy. Alack, my house is ill-suited for a revel; I pray excuse me.

Wol. Even so,—give me back the purse, it will elsewhere buy entertainment.

Overy. No, no; I will welcome my brother here.

Wol. And see thou dost so with heartiness, nay, with profusion:—farewell; in a brief space thy brother will be here. [*aside.*] Now, if he stint in entertainment, I discard him. [*Exit, C. D.*]

Overy. My brother here!—yet poor—another one to eat me up. [*counting money.*] Here are twenty-five pieces—a sum! a mighty sum! and to spend it in eating!—I would die first—yet how to prevent it?—die! did I say? a glorious thought! a great one! if I can but delay the

feast a day, I may find means to keep the purse!—I'll even counterfeit death; they coming, finding me dead, will have no appetite for feasting; thus I shall keep the gold!—it shall be so—I'll in—alarm my servants—throw myself upon the floor, and play the corse! oh, 'tis a thought, a thought worth worlds! [*goes to a door in flat.*] What, ho! Bosk—Mary—Shotbolt—help! help! help! [*Exit through door in flat.*]

Enter BOSK, C. D.

Bosk. My master's voice—not here! why where has the old man hid himself?—this door open!—master! no answer!—I'll in. [*Exit through door in flat.*]

Enter SHOTBOLT, C. D.

Shot. 'Tis past—Mary Overy is lost to me for ever!—I saw her enter the church—I could not follow her—I sat beneath the porch until they told me she had pronounced the oath, I then flew here to look once more upon the spot, and then to leave for ever——

Re-enter Bosk, in haste.

Bosk. Shotbolt!

Shot. How now! what alarm?—you are pale and trembling!

Bosk. Our master—heaven pardon him! he is dead!

Shot. Dead!

Bosk. Aye: I heard his voice, ran to his assistance—'twas too late—he lies there, an unsightly heap of death.

Shot. Poor Mary, 'twill be a sad shock upon her bridal day.

Bosk. It will indeed—run, and prepare her for the tidings, run and meet them.

Shot. What! meet her? meet dame Shafton? no, go you, good Bosk, I'll stay here.

Bosk. Do so; poor Mary, though she could not love the old man, yet 'twill be an evil tale. [*Exit, C. D.*]

Shot. What have I promised? to remain here until they return?—I cannot: I will retire into this room, from whence I may see them myself unseen, then steal away—where?—I know not!—but 'tis of little matter.

[*Music. Exit, l.*]

Enter MAYFLY, PARROQUET, and DAGGER, through window at side.

May. All are out, all at the wedding: now, now to work.

Par. Know you the spot?

May. Yes: I have watched the old mole at his toil—'tis somewhere here he burrows--ha!—[*Music.—He lifts up part of the flooring.*] Behold! there is a blaze!

Par. All the miser's heaps!

May. Quick! quick!—

[*Music.*—*They lift up several vessels of gold and silver, with bags of money; at this moment Overy appears at the door in flat.*

Overy. What noise is—[*seeing robbers.*] ha!—[*rushes madly amongst, and grapples with them.*] Villains! Murderers!—

May. Die!—

[*Music.*—*He stabs Overy; is about to repeat the blow, when SHOTBOLT rushes before the miser, and protects him; at the same moment, BOSK, MARY, FITZGEFFREY, and TRISTAN, enter at door, (C. D.) Bosk, and Fitzgeffrey cut off the retreat of Parroquet and Mayfly; Mary runs to her father.*

Mary. My father!—

May. Ah! defeated love shall have revenge!

[*Music.*—*Mayfly attempts to stab Mary; Shotbolt springs before her; wrests the dagger from Mayfly's hand; casts him down; catches Mary's hand; kisses it, exclaiming, "Bless you, Mary, heaven bless you!" and rushes wildly off, C. D.*

Mary. Father, speak to me!

Enter WOLSTAND, BALDWIN, and LEONARD, C. D.

Wol. My brother murdered!

Mary. Thy brother!

Wol. I'll tell thee all anon—look to him.

Overy. Brother—no, no, no feasting here—send him to the church-yard.

Mary. Father! dear father, dost thou not know me?

Overy. No; I had a child, but I sold her—she is in my purse.

Mary. Oh, heavens! he is dying!—father, father,—say one prayer—tell me you have hope.

Overy. Hope? aye—'tis here!—[*snatches one of the golden vessels, and one of the money-bags at his feet.*] this is my hope, my only hope! I wish none else—my hopes, my hopes, my—

[*Clasps the vessel and bag in his arms, and dies.*—*Music to fall of Curtain.*

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